

AT A GLANCE

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Fifth
Edition: English Only 25,000 October, 2002

Library of
Congress Cat. # 97-070435

ISBN # 0-911119-77-9

Printer: **RR Donnelley & Sons Company**
1009 Sloan Street
Crawfordsville, IN 47933 - USA

Publisher: **The Institute of Islamic Knowledge**
P. O. Box 8307
Houston, Texas 77288-8307, USA
Tel: (281) 448-4080 Fax: (713) 526-9090

2: AL-BAQARAH

Period of Revelation:

Though it is a Madani Sûrah (revealed at Madinah), it follows naturally a Makki Sûrah (revealed at Makkah) Al-Fâtiha, which ended with the prayer: "Guide us to the Right Way." This Sûrah begins with the answer to that prayer, "This is the guidance that you have asked for." The greater part of Al-Baqarah was revealed during the first two years of the Prophet's residence at Madinah.

Major Issues, Divine Laws and Guidance:

- * Claim of the Qur'an: "This is the Book which contains no doubt."
- * Creation of Adam, man's nature, and his destiny.
- * The Children of Israel and the People of the Book (Jews and Christians).
- * Israelites' sin of worshipping the statue of a calf.
- * Punishment of Israelites for violation of Sabbath.
- * Nature of Jews' belief.
- * Allah orders not to prevent the people from coming to Masâjid.
- * Ibrâheem and his sons were neither Jews nor Christians but were Muslims.
- * Abraham (Ibrâheem), Ishmael (Isma'il), and their building of the Ka'bah.
- * Change of Qiblah (direction in prayers) towards the Ka'bah in Makkah.
- * Allah orders not to profess any faith blindly.
- * The moon is created to determine the time periods i.e. months and years.
- * Hypocrisy vs. True faith.
- * Ayat-ul-Kursi (Verse of the Throne of Allah).
- * Allah orders the believers to enter into Islam completely.
- * Punishment of a murtad (a Muslim who becomes a Non-Muslim).
- * It is unlawful to marry a mushrik (who worship someone else besides Allah).
- * Victory is not by numbers but by Allah's help.
- * Confrontation of Ibrâheem and Namrûd (the king of his time).
- * What makes charity worthless.
- * Taking usury is like declaring war against Allah and his Rasool.
- * All business dealings relating to deferred payments must be in writing.
- * Retaliation against oppression.
- * Non compulsion in religion.
- * Divine Laws are promulgated relating to the following categories:

Food	Retribution	Wills
Fasting	Bribery	Jihâd
Self-defense	Evidence	Pilgrimage
Charity	Drinking	Bloodwit

Gambling	Marriage	Orphans
Menstruation	Oaths	Divorce
Alimony	Nursing	Widows
Usury	Buying on Credit	Debts
Loans	Pledge/Mortgage	

* Believers supplication to Allah.

Guidance is also provided concerning social, cultural, economic, political and legal issues through addressing the Jews who were acquainted with the Unity of Allah, Prophethood, Revelation, the Hereafter and Angels. The Jews professed to believe in the law which was revealed by Allah to their Prophet Moses (pbuh). In principle, their religion was the same (Islam) that was being taught by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Although they were originally Muslims, they had swerved from the real Islam and made innovations and alterations to their religion. As a result, they had fallen victims to hair splitting and sectarianism, so much so that they had even given up their original name "Muslim" and adopted the name "Jew" instead, and made religion a monopoly of the children of Israel. This was Jews religious condition when the Prophet went to Madinah and invited them to the True Religion. More than one third of this Sûrah (Chapter) addresses the Children of Israel. A critical review of their history, moral degeneration and religious perversions has been made, to draw clear lines of demarcation between the essentials and nonessentials of the True Religion. The Jews are warned not to mix up the Truth with Falsehood.

During this period, a new type of Muslims called "Munâfiqûn" (hypocrites), had emerged. There were some who had entered the fold of Islam merely to harm it from within. There were others who were surrounded by Muslims, and become "Muslims" to safeguard their worldly interests. They, therefore, continued to have relations with the unbelievers so that if they became successful, their interests would remain secure. Allah has, therefore, briefly pointed out the characteristics of the hypocrites in this Sûrah. Later on when their mischievous deeds became manifest, detailed instructions were given in Sûrah At-Tauba.

In brief, this Sûrah is an invitation towards the Divine Guidance. All stories, examples and incidents mentioned in this Sûrah revolve around this central theme. This Sûrah particularly addresses the Jews and cites many incidents from their history to admonish and advise them that accepting the Guidance revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is in their best interest. They should, therefore, be the first to accept it, because this Message is basically the same as was revealed to the Prophet Musa (Moses), peace be upon him.

2: AL-BAQARAH

This Sûrah, revealed at Madinah, has 40 sections and 286 verses.

In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful.

SECTION: 1

Alif L'âm M'eem.^[1] This is the Book (*the Qur'an*) in which there is no doubt. (*Since its author, Allah, the Creator of the universe, possesses complete and perfect knowledge, there is no room for doubt about its contents.*) It is a guidance for the God conscious,^[2] who believe in the Unseen, establish Salah (*five regular daily prayers*) and spend in charity out of what We have provided for their sustenance;^[3] who believe in this Revelation (*the Qur'an*) which is sent to you (*O Muhammad*) and the Revelations which were sent before you (*Torah, Psalms, Gospel...*) and firmly believe in the Hereafter.^[4] They are on true Guidance from their Rabb and they are the ones who will attain salvation.^[5] 2:[1-5]

Surely, those who reject Faith; it is the same, whether you warn them or you do not, they will not believe.^[6] Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing; on their eyes there is a veil, and there is a grievous punishment for them.^[7] 2:[6-7]

SECTION: 2

There are some people who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day;" yet, they are not *true* believers.^[8] They *try* to deceive Allah and the believers. However, they deceive none except themselves; yet, they do not realize it.^[9] In their hearts is a disease (*of doubt and hypocrisy, and because of their misbehavior*) Allah has increased their disease and they shall have a painful punishment for the lies they have told.^[10] When it is said to them: "Do not make mischief on earth," they say: "We make peace."^[11] Beware! They are the ones who make mischief but they do not realize it.^[12] When they are told: "Believe as the others believe," they *sarcastically* ask: "Should we believe like fools?" Be aware! They themselves are the fools, if only they could understand.^[13] When they meet the believers they say: "We are believers," but when they are alone with their shaitâns, they say: "We are really with you; we were only mocking *the believers*."^[14] Allah will throw back their mockery on them and leave them alone in their trespasses; so they wander to and fro like the blind.^[15] These are the people who barter guidance for error: but their bargain is profitless and they are not going to be guided.^[16] 2:[8-16]

Al-Qur'an is free from all doubts

It is a guide for the God-conscious

Warning is of no avail for those who reject faith

Hypocrites and consequences of hypocrisy

Examples of their
deeds

Their example is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it illuminated all around him Allah took away their light (*their eyesight*) and left them in utter darkness: they could see nothing.^[17] Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will never return to the *Right Way*.^[18] Or *another example is that* of a dark storm-cloud in the sky charged with thunder and lightning. They press their fingers to their ears at the sound of each stunning thunderclap for fear of death: Allah is encircling the unbelievers from all sides.^[19] The lightning *terrifies them* as if it was going to snatch away their eyesight; whenever it flashes they walk on; when it becomes dark, they stand still. And if Allah wanted He could have taken away their hearing and their sight; for Allah has power over everything.^[20] 2:[17-20]

SECTION: 3

Allah's demand to
worship Him
Alone

O mankind! Worship your Rabb Who created you and created those who came before you; *by doing this* you may become pious.^[21] It is He Who has made the earth a resting place for you and the sky a canopy; and it is *He Who* sends down rain from the sky for the growth of fruits for your sustenance. Therefore, do not knowingly set up rivals to Allah.^[22] 2:[21-22]

The claim of The
Qur'an to be the
Book of Allah

If you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent to Our servant (*Muhammad*), then produce one *Sûrah* like this; and call your witnesses (*gods that you call upon*) besides Allah to assist you, if you are right in your claim.^[23] But if you are unable to do so, and you can never do so, then fear the Hell fire, whose fuel is men and stones which is prepared for the unbelievers.^[24] 2:[23-24]

Reward for the
believers

Give glad tidings to those who believe and do good deeds, for them there will be Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Whenever they will be given fruits to eat they will say: "This is similar to the one we used to eat before," for they will be provided *fruits* which will resemble *the fruits on the earth*; and for them there will be chaste virgin spouses, and they shall live therein for ever.^[25] 2:[25]

Parable of gnat
may confound
many and en-
lighten many

Allah does not hesitate to use the similitude of a gnat or an even more insignificant *creature*. Those who believe, know that it is the truth from their Rabb; as for the unbelievers, they will say: "What does Allah mean by such a similitude?" By such a *similitude*, Allah confounds many and enlightens many. He confounds none except the transgressors:^[26] those who break Allah's